

Spark Gap

Volume 24, Issue 2, February 2007



FCC Rules No Code

It's Official!
Morse Code
Requirement
Ends Friday,
February 23

NEWINGTON, CT, Jan 24, 2007 — Circle Friday, February 23, on your calendar. That's when the current 5 WPM Morse code requirement will officially disappear from the Amateur Radio Service Part 97 rules in accordance with the FCC's *Report and Order (R&O)* in the "Morse code proceeding," WT Docket 05-235. Beginning on that date, applicants for a General or Amateur Extra class Amateur Radio license no longer will have to demonstrate proficiency in Morse code. They'll just have to pass the applicable written examination. Publication of the new rules in the January 24 *Federal Register* started a 30-day countdown for the new rules to become effective. Deletion of the Morse requirement — still a matter of controversy within the amateur community — is a landmark in Amateur Radio history.

"The overall effect of this action is to further the public interest by encouraging individuals who are interested in communications technology or who are able to contribute to the advancement of the radio art, to become Amateur Radio operators; and eliminating a requirement that is now unnecessary and may discourage Amateur Service licensees from advancing their skills in the communications and technical phases of Amateur Radio," the FCC remarked in the "Morse code" *R&O* that settled the matter, at least from a regulatory standpoint. The League had asked the FCC to retain the 5 WPM for Amateur Extra class applicants, but the Commission held to its decision to eliminate the requirement across

the board. The *R&O* appearing in the *Federal Register* constitutes the official version of the new rules.

The new rules also put all Technician licensees on an equal footing, whether or not they've passed a Morse code examination. Starting February 23, all Technicians will have CW privileges on 80, 40, 15 meters and CW, RTTY, data and SSB privileges on 10 meters. When the new rules go into effect Technicians may begin using their new privileges without any further action.

On or after February 23, an applicant holding a valid *Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE)* for Element 3 (General) or Element 4 (Amateur Extra) credit may redeem it for an upgrade at a Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) exam session. A CSCE is good for 365 days from the date of issuance, *no exceptions*. For example, a Technician licensee holding a valid CSCE for Element 3 credit would have to apply at a VEC test session and pay the application fee, which most VECs charge, in order to receive an instant upgrade to General.

ARRL Regulatory Information Specialist Dan Henderson, N1ND, cautions that a license upgrade is *not* automatic for those holding valid CSCEs for element credit. "You must apply for the upgrade at a VEC test session, and you may *not* operate as /AG or /AE *until* you have upgraded and have been issued a CSCE marked for upgrade," he stresses.

The ARRL has posted all relevant information on these important Part 97 rule revisions on its "[FCC's Morse Code Report and Order WT Docket 05-235](#)" Web page.

*The Official
Newsletter of the
Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club*



Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club
P. O. Box 836
Franklin, IN 46131
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***February
23, 2007
Start***

No Code-Free Upgrades Available Until February 23

NEWINGTON, CT, Feb 5, 2007 — Code-free upgrades to General or Amateur Extra will not be available at volunteer examination sessions until the 5 WPM Morse code requirement disappears from the FCC's Amateur Radio Service rules on February 23. ARRL Regulatory Information Specialist Dan Henderson, N1ND, says that, judging from the questions he's been getting, many in the amateur community — including some Volunteer Examiners (VEs) — don't fully understand the new rules and privileges resulting from the FCC's *Report and Order* ([R&O](#)) in the "Morse code proceeding," WT Docket 05-235. He stresses that VE teams may *not* accept upgrade applications in advance of February 23, then hold the paperwork.



"There will be no instant midnight upgrades February 23 for applicants advancing to General or Amateur Extra," Henderson explains. "You must make application." He further advises that a Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) valid

for Element 3 (General) or Element 4 (Amateur Extra) credit does *not* confer any operating privileges and, lacking Morse code credit, is no good for an upgrade until the new rules become effective.

"Anyone holding or earning a valid CSCE for element credit must wait until February 23 to redeem it at a volunteer examination session," he says. "You may *not* operate as /AG or /AE *until* you have upgraded and have been issued a CSCE marked for upgrade." A CSCE is good for 365 days from the date of issuance, *no exceptions*.

Henderson further emphasizes that those who qualified as Technician licensees under the examination regime in place from March 21, 1987, until April 15, 2000, do *not* get General class Element 3 credit on that basis. For starters, he says, the "old" Element 3 is not the same as the current Element 3.

"When the Novice and Advanced examination elements went away, the FCC re-numbered the elements," he explains. "Those who passed Element 3 from March 21, 1987 until April 15, 2000, qualified for the Technician license, and the exam was not the same as the current Element 3 General element test."

Applicants upgrading at a test session on or after February 23 on the basis of a valid CSCE must present the certificate for element credit, fill out an application and pay any applicable exam session fee, which most VECs charge. Between now and then, Henderson points out, upgrade applicants still have the option of passing the 5 WPM Element 1 Morse code test in addition to the General or Amateur Extra written tests.

Technician licensees who have not passed a Morse code examination automatically gain new privileges on February 23 *without* having to apply at an exam session. But they're the only ones. On that date, all Novices and Technicians will have equal privileges on HF: CW on parts of 80, 40 and 15 meters, and CW, SSB and data on parts of 10 meters.

The ARRL has posted all relevant information on these important Part 97 rule revisions on its "[FCC's Morse Code Report and Order WT Docket 05-235](#)" Web page.

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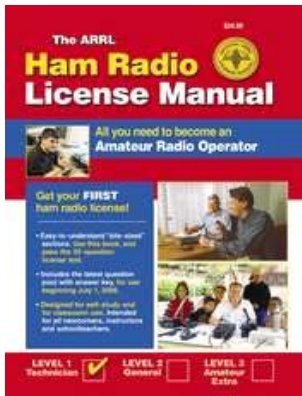
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Technician Class Begins Soon



The next Technician Class scheduled to begin February 21st may be postponed until March 21st. There has been some difficulties in getting an advertising push to all local media and in getting class materials together. In addition, the February 21st start date has generated little interest possibly due to the extremely cold weather and the two February snow events. We were never able to get the class information on our website. As a first year planner for this event, I think I underestimated the time it takes to get this all done. I'm still looking for someone to teach the 7th class on RF Safety.

This will be discussed at the February 17th meeting and a final decision made then. Please send suggestions and comments to Linda, PIO@midstatehams.org.

In The News...

Johnson County's EMA Director Forrest "Tug" Sutton was featured in the January 2007 Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) newsletter, The Hoosier Responder. Our Webmaster will place a link on our website so that you can all read the article. Linda will have a copy at the next meeting.

24th Annual Columbus Hamfest On Tap for March 23, 2007

Sponsored by the Columbus Amateur Radio Club, the event will feature our VE Testing Team led by KA9OOH, Dave Wendt. The VE team is expecting a record turnout as this will be the first Indiana Hamfest following the no code ruling by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The event will be held at the Bartholomew County Fairgrounds Community Building in Columbus, Indiana.

According to Dave, the team is ready to go and has plenty of forms for the event which looks to exceed the extremely good turn-out last year.

The event runs from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. with an admission price of \$5.00 at the show or \$4.50 in advance. Door Prizes will be awarded including the Grand Prize of a Kenwood TM-V708A 2meter/440 mobile radio.

Flea market space is available. For more information, see the website at <http://www.qsl.net/carc> or contact Marion Winterberg, WD9HTN, 812-342-4670. His email is carc_in@yahoo.com.

For more information on testing contact Dave Wendt, KA9OOH at 317-881-6531 or via e-mail at veteam@midstatehams.org.

See you there!

WA9RDF
Repeater
**146.835/
146.235 MHz
151.4 Hz PL
Tone**

Weekly Net
***Every Sunday
at 7PM EST***

***Tune in to hear
the ARRL
Newsline!***

*The Mid-State
Amateur Radio Club
sponsors a weekly
traffic and social net
on our repeater. The
net begins at 7:00
p.m. local time, and
features local news,
announcements, and
NTS traffic, as well
as rebroadcasts of
Amateur Radio
Newsline.*

Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time. This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills. Newline is often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby. For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to netcontrol@midstatehams.org and we will record your check-in!



Mid-State Amateur
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2007 Schedule of Events

Public Service Events and/or Educational/Testing Opportunities

FEBRUARY 2007

17 **MARC Meeting - 8AM**

VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am)

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

18 **MARC Celebrates 24 years!**

Check out our History webpage for details on that first meeting 24 years ago today.

Congratulations MARC!

21 **Technician Class begins (tentative)**

White River Township Library Community Room, SR 135 and Smith Valley Road.

Check our website for directions to the Library and for a full schedule of classes.

24 **Cabin Fever Hamfest, LaPorte, IN**

Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge Street, LaPorte, IN 46350 - For more information see their website at <http://www.K9JSI.org>; Talk-in will be on 146.610 (PL131.8)

28 **Technician Class - 2nd class (tentative)**

White River Township Library Community Room, SR 135 and Smith Valley Road.

Check our website for directions to the Library and for a full schedule of classes.

MARCH 2007

17 **MARC Meeting - 8 AM**

VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am)

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

19 **National Weather Service - Indianapolis - Spotter Class - 7 PM - 9 PM**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

21 **Technician Class - 3rd class (tentative)**

White River Township Library Community Room, SR 135 and Smith Valley Road.

Check our website for directions to the Library and for a full schedule of classes.

23 **FCC drops Morse Code requirements.**

Beginning on this date Morse Code will no longer be required for any license types.

28 **Technician Class - 4th class (tentative)**

White River Township Library Community Room, SR 135 and Smith Valley Road.

Check our website for directions to the Library and for a full schedule of classes.

31 **Columbus Hamfest**

Bartholomew County Fairgrounds, Columbus, IN

MARC will be conducting VE testing at the Hamfest.

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131.

See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our